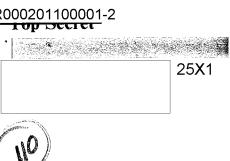
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Latin America Review

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Supplement 26 October 1984

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Articles			
Cuba: Bracing for War?	2		
President Castro appears increasingly anxious about the possibility of US military intervention in Central America, and even an attack on Cuba itself, if President Reagan is reelected. Over the past few months, Castro has stepped up efforts to increase Cuba's defensive preparedness and to make an attack on Cuba as costly as possible to the United States. He also is responding to the perceived threat—and to setbacks beginning with the loss of Grenada—by conducting a propaganda campaign aimed at influencing US allies and the American public, apparently in hopes of dissuading Washington from using military force. Although Castro may be using the pretext of a US attack to prepare the population for some provocative act that could draw US retaliation, it is more likely that he will avoid openly aggressive measures, at least for the near term, to buy time to strengthen Cuba—and Nicaragua—militarily. Improving Cuba's Defenses Various Cuban leaders—including Castro—have	22		
publicly cmphasized in recent weeks their belief that the threat of war with the United States is real.	Seventy-year-old member of the Territorial Militia Verde Olivo 25%		
rears the United States will take direct military action against Nicaragua and the Salvadoran guerrillas. a film on civil defense sent to Cuban Communist Party members in	arms deliveries and the continuing modernization and expansion of Cuba's armed forces.		
August warned of bombardments and an eventual US invasion of Cuba. The film also criticized the performance of Cuban military personnel during the Grenada fighting, adding that in the future Cubans	25X		
stationed abroad will fight to the death.	In the past year, Cuba's Territorial Militia has grown 25X from 500,000 to more than 1.2 million—more than 10		

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Cuba's capability to defend itself has improved

considerably during this decade as a result of Soviet

percent of the population

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Militia members—mainly women and others not part of the regular military or reserves—reportedly are receiving guerrilla warfare training to enable them to inflict high casualties on an invading force. Havana also announced recently that all Cubans must devote one day a month, in addition to militia training, to military training in preparation for anticipated US military aggression.

Havana appears to be preparing the populace—both physically and psychologically—to fight a "people's war" similar to that waged by the Vietnamese against US forces. Civil defense exercises conducted throughout Cuba in recent months have emphasized "self-defense" of the revolution, probably reflecting Havana's perception that the USSR would not come to its aid militarily in the event of a US attack. A civil defense exercise that took place last month in Havana—the most extensive seen in over a year, according to the US Interests Section—simulated a massive surprise US air attack and included evacuation drills, treatment of casualties, and training by female militia members.



Students descending into air raid shelter constructed under schoolyard

Verde Olivo

Soviet arms deliveries—larger in each of the past four years than at any time since the peak period of the missile crisis in 1962—have boosted Cuba's military capabilities. Improvements to Cuba's Air and Air Defense Force seem designed to make an air attack against Cuba a costly one.

Naval training and new equipment—such as submarines and frigates—have improved Cuba's ability to respond to a blockade or amphibious assault.

Havana's Motives

The US military intervention in Grenada, coupled with US public approval of the action and the lack of a strong Soviet response, probably has caused Castro considerable concern in calculating future US policy. The regime's costly war preparations suggest Castro has little faith that Moscow would act to deter the United States from attacking Cuba.

Havana is worried that the Soviets may be willing to concede the Caribbean to the US sphere of influence. Moreover, the preparations appear to be more than rhetoric designed to distract the populace from its domestic woes. Although Castro has been concerned about US intentions since President Reagan was elected in 1980, the level of effort being expended in these preparations and the recent statements by Cuban officials indicate that Havana sees the threat now as more severe.

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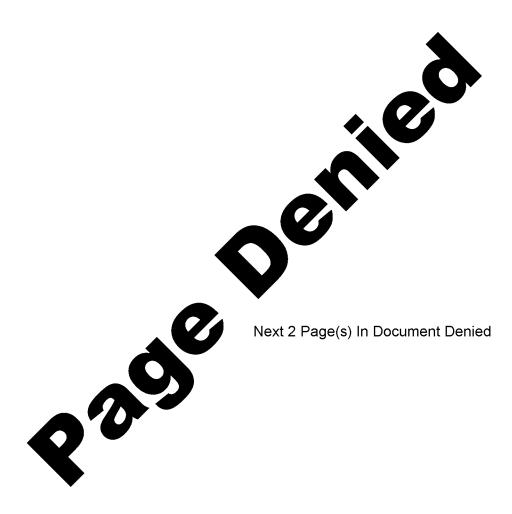
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Castro may, on the other hand, have his own motives for the current campaign. For example, he could be attempting to use the threat of US attack to focus

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